

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KIGALI 00320 01 OF 02 231721Z
ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EUR-08 IO-06 ARA-06 L-01 H-01
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P R 230727Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4679
INFO AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY BONN
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KIGALI 320

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, RW, US, CG, UR, CU, BY
SUBJECT: CONTINUING GOR WORRIES ABOUT SOVIETS AND CUBANS -- AND
U.S.

REF KIGALI 309 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: FONMIN NSEKALIJE ELABORATED IN QUIET OF HIS OFFICE
MARCH 22 ON SEMI-JOCULAR REMARKS MADE TO ME AT
RECEPTION LAST WEEK WARNING OF SOVIET/CUBAN MACHINATIONS IN
CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN AFRICA. ONCE AGAIN, HE INSISTED U.S.
UNDERESTIMATED THEIR DESIGNS, ARGUED THAT KATANGAN INCURSION
INTO ZAIRE COULD ONLY HAVE HAPPENED WITH THEIR SUPPORT, AND
FRETTE OVER SOVIET-ASSISTED BUILD-UP IN BURUNDI. U.S. AND
WEST RISKED "LOSING" AFRICA IF THEY DID NOT STAND UP TO SOVIET
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PAGE 02 KIGALI 00320 01 OF 02 231721Z

CHALLENGE AND STAND BY FRIENDS LIKE RWANDA. END SUMMARY

1. HOPING FOR CLEARER PICTURE OF RWANDAN VIEWS ON RECENT
ZAIRE/ANGOLA/BRAZZAVILE EVENTS THAN I WAS ABLE TO GET AT
NOISY RECEPTION MARCH 19 (REFTEL), I ASKED TO SEE FONMIN
NSEKALIJE TUESDAY MORNING. HE RECEIVED ME PROMPTLY AND SPENT
NEARLY AN HOUR TRACING GOR CONCERNS ABOUT GROWING SOVIET/CUBANS

PRESENCE, EMPHASIZING AS BEFORE THAT USG WAS UNDERESTIMATING ITS SIGNIFICANCE.

2. NSEKALIJE RECALLED THAT HE (AND PRESIDENT) HAD PREVIOUSLY DESCRIBED FOR ME THEIR VIEW OF CHANGING AFRICAN MAP, AS LINE OF SOVIET-INFLUENCED COUNTRIES STRETCHED ACROSS CONTINENT FROM SOMALIA TO ANGOLA. HE SAID THAT, AS EARLY AS 1974, GOR HAD BECOME ALARMED AT TREND AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR RWANDA, AND HAD VOICED ITS CONCERN AT HIGH LEVELS IN BRUSSELS AND PARIS, TO NO AVAIL. SINCE THEN, WORRIES HAD GROWN AS CUBAN PRESENCE IN ANGOLA INTENSIFIED, ETHIOPIA WENT ROUND THE BEND, IDI AMIN GREW WILDER, BURUNDI GOT SOVIET ARMS AND PLAYED FOOTsie WITH HAVANA, AND "FRONT LINE" COUNTRIES INCLINED INCREASINGLY TOWARD VIOLENCE. AND NOW THERE WAS CASTRO'S TOUR OF EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA, SOON TO BE FOLLOWED BY SOVIET'S PODGORNYY--HOW COULD ANYONE IMAGINE THEY WERE NOT UP TO WELL-COORDINATED MISCHIEF?

3. DID GOR REALLY BELIEVE, I ASKED, THAT SOVS AND CUBANS WERE INVOLVED IN LATEST DIFFICULTIES IN ZAIRE AND BRAZZAVILLE? NSEKALIJE POINTED TO HIS NEW RAND-MCNALLY GLOBE AND ASKED HOW KATANGANS, DEEP IN AFRICAN CONTINENT, COULD HAVE OBTAINED WEAPONS, VEHICLES, AND SUPPLIES TO MOUNT AN INVASION OF SHABA WITHOUT AT LEAST TACIT SUPPORT FROM ANGOLA; AND WHERE THOSE SUPPLIES COULD HAVE COME FROM, TRANSITING ANGOLA, IF NOT FROM CUBA OR USSR. (ADDED HE WOULD BE TRAVELING TO KINSHASA IN NEXT DAY OR TWO TO REVIEW SITUATION WITH GOZ AND ASSURE MOBUTU OF HABYARIMANA'S SUPPORT.) HE WAS LESS SURE ABOUT SOVIET ROLE IN BRAZZA, SAYING IT REMAINED TO CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 KIGALI 00320 01 OF 02 231721Z

BE SEEN WHETHER NGOUABI'S SUCCESSORS ADOPTED MORE ACCOMMODATING LINE TOWARD USSR AND CUBA.

4. FONMIN VOLUNTEERED THAT GOR WAS EVEN MORE WORRIED ABOUT APPARENT SOVIET/CUBAN ROLE IN BURUNDI NEXT DOOR. MILITARILY, GOB WAS ALREADY FOUR TO FIVE TIMES STRONGER THAN RWANDA. WITH ADDITIONAL "SOPHISTICATED" WEAPONS HE SAID WERE ON WAY FROM SOVIET UNION (NEGOTIATED BY NOW-PRESIDENT BAGAZA), BURUNDI WOULD BECOME TWICE AS GREAT A THREAT. AND WHO KNEW WHAT HAD BEEN PURPOSE OF BURUNDI FONMIN'S TRIP TO HAVANA LAST SEPTEMBER? GOR HAD REASON TO FEAR THAT CUBANS MIGHT HAVE BEEN PERSUADED TO FURNISH TRAINING CADRES TO BURUNDI ARMY. NOW CONTEMPLATE WHAT THIS MEANT TO RWANDA, HE ASKED, WITH THOUSANDS OF TUTSI REFUGEES IN BURUNDI WHO MIGHT WELL BE TRAINED AND HEAVILY ARMED TO MAKE A KATANGA-LIKE INCURSION ACROSS RWANDAN BORDER.

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PAGE 01 KIGALI 00320 02 OF 02 241012Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KIGALI 320

LIMDIS

5. NSEKALIJE SAID PRES. HABYARIMANA HAD RAISED THIS SPECTER DURING LAST WEEK'S OFFICIAL VISIT TO BONN, WARNING THAT FRG AND WESTERN ALLIES SHOULD TAKE CENTRAL AFRICAN SITUATION MORE SERIOUSLY. HE SAID SCHEEL REPLIED THAT SITUATION WAS INDEED BEING WATCHED WITH CONCERN, THAT FRG HAD CONSULTED WITH USG AND OTHERS, BUT THAT ELECTIONS IN SEVERAL WESTERN COUNTRIES HAD LATELY DISTRACTED ATTENTION AND DELAYED CONCERTED ACTION.

6. I COMMENTED TO FONMIN THAT MY COLLEAGUE IN BUJUMBURA SHARED MY OWN CONCERN AT GROWING MILITARY IMBALANCE BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES AND AT NEED TO DISCOURAGE ARMS RACE. I SAID AMBASSADOR MARK HAD GONE SO FAR AS TO URGE RESTRAINT ON PRES. BAGAZA (BUJUMBURA 284), ADDING THAT HOPED FOR SIMILAR RESTRAINT FROM RWANDANS. AND I REPEATED TO NSEKALIJE THAT
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PAGE 02 KIGALI 00320 02 OF 02 241012Z

I SAW NO POSSIBILITY WHATEVER THAT USG WOULD ENTER ARMS RACE BETWEEN RWANDA AND NEIGHBORS.

7. FONMIN SEEMED PLEASED AT MARK'S INITIATIVE AND SAID GOR DIDN'T WANT ARMS RACE EITHER. BUT HE INSISTED RWANDA STILL NEEDED "DISSUASION" FORCE OF ITS OWN EQUAL TO AT LEAST ONE-THIRD BURUNDI'S STRENGTH. IF SUG WOULD MERELY DO FOR RWANDA WHAT IT WAS DOING FOR ZAIRE--I.E., PROVIDE NON-LETHAL MILITARY SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT--THAT WOULD GO A LONG WAY TOWARD ACHIEVING SUFFICIENT DETERRENT STRENGTH. ANY WEAPONS IT NEEDED MIGHT BE OBTAINED FROM OTHER SOURCES. POINTING TO CURRENT CRITICISM OF OUR AID TO ZAIRE, I SAID I SAW LITTLE POSSIBILITY OF THIS EITHER.

8. NSEKALIJE SEEMED GENUINELY BAFFLED. HOW, HE ASKED, COULD U.S. AND WESTERN FRIENDS AFFORD TO "LOSE AFRICA" TO SOVIETS? I REPLIED THAT AFRICA WAS NOT OURS TO LOSE--IT WAS AFRICANS'. RIDICULOUS, HE SAID. DEPARTURE OF COLONIAL POWERS HAD LEFT AFRICAN NATIONS "BABIES, BEGGING MOTHER'S MILK FROM EUROPEANS, UNABLE TO STAND ON OWN FEET." DESPITE POSTURING OF NATIONALISTS, WEST HAD TO RECOGNIZE THAT SERIOUS POWER VACUUM EXISTED IN POST-COLONIAL AFRICA AND THAT SOVIETS WERE MOVING INEXORABLY TO FILL THAT VACUUM.

9. WITH NOWHERE FURTHER TO GO, WE CHANGED THE SUBJECT.

10. COMMENT: IN CONTRAST TO OUR SATURDAY ENCOUNTER, NSEKALIJE WAS NOT JOCLAR BUT SERIOUS AND QUIET IN RECITING GOR CONCERNS, AND HE EVEN OFFERED TO SET THEM DOWN FOR ME IN A CONFIDENTIAL DIPLOMATIC NOTE (I DECLINED HIS OFFER). I KNOW HIS VIEWS MUST SOUND PARANOID TO WASHINGTON READERS, BUT FROM KIGALI VANTAGE POINT THEY ARE LESS EASILY DISMISSED. CERTAINLY I HAVE HAD NO LUCK IN PERSUADING HIM OR OTHER RWANDANS THAT THEY MIGHT BE EXAGGERATED.

11. WHAT THESE VIEWPOINTS SEEM TO PORTEND FOR US IS
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PAGE 03 KIGALI 00320 02 OF 02 241012Z

INCREASING PRESSURE FOR U.S. ASSISTANCE, MIXED WITH INCREASINGLY BOLD ATTEMPTS TO PLACE US IN RWANDA'S DEBT. E.G., STILL CHAFING AT MY EARLIER LECTURE ABOUT RWANDA'S BATTING AVERAGE ON U.N. VOTES, NSEKALIJE SAID HE HAD GIVEN INSTRUCTIONS TO RWANDAN DEL IN NEW YORK "NOT TO VOTE AGAINST U.S. ON ANYTHING" IN ABSENCE OF SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS FROM KIGALI. CAN WE AFFORD SUCH FRIENDSHIP?
CRIGLER

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Message Attributes

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